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Message Text

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43
ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 L-03 SAB-01

AID-05 IGA-02 H-02 PRS-01 /058 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:RCAMAUR/JPBECKER:ENADEAU
APPROVED BY ARA/PAN:SMBELL
ARA/LA:HKLEINE(DRAFT)
LA/GC:NWILLIAMS (DRAFT)
L/ARA:MGKOZAK (DRAFT)
ARA/CCA:CGLEYSTEEN (DRAFT)
DOD:GENERAL DOLVIN (SUBST.)
OD/ISA:LJACKLEY (IN SUBSTANCE)
ARA/PLC:AWILLIANS (DRAFT)
OD/ISA:LJACKLEY (IN SUBSTANCE)
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O 081713Z JAN 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE
INFO USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 004405

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: TORRIJOS VISIT TO CUBA

REF: (A) PANAMA 6193 (B) 470TH GROUP CABLE 231937Z
(C) BELL/JORDEN TELECOM L/7/76
1. DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED THAT TORRIJOS VISIT MAY RESULT IN ESTABLISHING ON-GOING SUBSTANTIVE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA THROUGH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. THERE WOULD BE A GENERAL ADVERSE REACTION TO CLOSER TIES BETWEEN CUBA AND PANAMA IN THE U.S. (PARTICULARLY IF ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS INVOLVE THE PRESENCE OF CUBAN ADVISORS IN PANAMA). MORE-
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OVER, THERE ARE CERTAIN SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WE

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BELIEVE GOP SHOULD BE AWARE OF PRIOR TO THE TORRIJOS TRIP.

2. WE ACCEPT VALIDITY OF RATIONALE THAT CUBA TRIP IS IMPORTANT TO TORRIJOS IN DEALING WITH HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, FOLLOW-ON ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS DO NOT SEEM NECESSARY IN THAT CONTEXT AND PANAMA MAY WELL UNDERESTIMATE THE COMPLICATIONS SUCH ARRANGEMENTS COULD CAUSE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP.

3. WHILE IT MAY BE POSSIBLE WITH TIME TO MITIGATE ANY AD-VERSE EFFECT OF THE TORRIJOS TRIP TO CUBA AND STATEMENTS

MADE WHILE THERE, ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE A SOURCE OF CONTINUING IRRITATION AND CONFLICT VIS-A-VIS OUR PRESENT POLICIES AND PROPOSED PROGRAMS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE A CUBA/PANAMA MILITARY COOPERATION ARRANGEMENT WITH CONCEPT OF U.S./PANAMA PARTNERSHIP IN CANAL DEFENSE AND PROGRAM OF MILITARY ARMS SALES; OR TO UNDERSTAND NEED FOR AGREEMENT WITH CUBA IN RURAL HEALTH IN VIEW OF JOINT PROGRAM BEING DEVELOPED WITH PANAMA FOR A.I.D. FINANCING OF A MAJOR RURAL HEALTH EFFORT OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

4. THERE ARE LEGAL COMPLICATIONS AS WELL. SECTION 620 (A) (1) OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT PROHIBITS ASSISTANCE TO ANY COUNTRY WHICH FURNISHES ASSISTANCE TO CUBA. IF PANAMA PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO CUBA, IN ORDER TO INITIATE NEW AID PROJECTS IN PANAMA, WE WOULD NEED TO OBTAIN A WAIVER BASED ON A DETERMINATION THAT IT WAS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO DO SO. WE WOULD ALSO BE REQUIRED TO INFORM CONGRESS OF THE WAIVER. THE POLITICAL COSTS OF MAKING SUCH A WAIVER COULD BE SUBSTANTIAL.

5. IN VIEW OF THE POTENTIAL SERIOUS LONG TERM EFFECTS OF WHAT MIGHT IN THE PANAMANIAN VIEW BE MERELY INFORMAL AND PERHAPS MODEST EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENT WITH CUBA, DIRECTOR OF ARA/PAN AND DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR EMPHASIZED FOLLOWING POINTS IN DISCUSSION WITH GONZALEZ-REVILLA JANUARY 5:

-- WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT DURING GENERAL TORRIJOS'
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UPCOMING VISIT TO CUBA THE TWO COUNTRIES MAY ENTER INTO ONE OR MORE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS.

-- WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED OUR VIEWS ON THE POTENTIAL REACTION IN THE U.S. TO THE CUBAN TRIP AND SEE NO NEED TO REPEAT THOSE VIEWS AGAIN. TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE MISUNDER-STANDINGS, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT USEFUL TO POINT OUT THAT ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS WITH CUBA COULD BE A SOURCE OF CON-

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TINUING IRRITATION AND CONFLICT IN OUR RELATIONS. SUCH AGREEMENTS WOULD CERTAINLY BE VIEWED BY THE U.S. AS TANGIBLE SIGNS THAT PANAMA HAS ESTABLISHED SUBSTANTIVE BILATERAL TIES WITH CUBA AT THE VERY TIME WHEN WE ARE RECOMMENDING A CLOSE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT IN AREAS VERY IMPORTANT TO U.S. INTERESTS. THERE MAY BE OBVIOUS CONFLICTS AND CAUSES FOR MISUNDERSTANDINGS INHERENT IN SUCH AGREEMENTS AND SOME LEGAL COMPLICATIONS AS WELL.

-- SECTION 620 (A) (A1) OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS THE FURNISHING OF ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES WHICH FURNISH ASSISTANCE TO CUBA. ALTHOUGH THE STATUTE CONTAINS A PROVISION FOR WAIVING THE PROHIBITION ON ASSISTANCE, THE CONGRESS MUST BE INFORMED OF THE WAIVER, AND THUS THE POLITICAL COST OF WAIVING COULD BE SUBSTANTIAL.

-- IN ADDITION, THE FURNISHING OF ASSISTANCE BY CUBA TO PANAMA IN SECTORS IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES IS FURNISHING OR MAY FURNISH ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE MAY REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES TO EXAMINE SUCH PROGRAMS CAREFULLY. FOR EXAMPLE, WE FORESEE POTENTIAL CONFLICTS IN THE AID AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND OR RECONCILE WITH U.S. POLICY.

-- AS YOU WILL READILY APPRECIATE, THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED ABOVE GO BEYOND THE CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES WHICH WE HAVE DISCUSSED EARLIER AND NOW FOCUS ON CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE BROAD IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.-PANAMANIAN RELATIONS AND FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, OF WHICH BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN JUSTLY PROUD.

6. AMBASSADOR STATED THAT HE WOULD REPORT ABOVE TO HIS

GOVERNMENT. EMBASSY SHOULD DISCUSS SUBJECT WITH APPROPRIATE PANAMANIAN CONTACTS DURING FEW DAYS REMAINING BEFORE TORRIJOS DEPARTURE FOR CUBA. PLEASE INFORM DEPARTMENT OF PANAMANIAN REACTION TO U.S. APPROACH AND ANY FURTHER INDICATION OF PANAMANIAN INTENTIONS. KISSINGER

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